

PTCC Junior Report 2020/21

As I am sure most reports will begin, 2020 was a strange year for the junior section. Back in February before the pandemic arrived to completely wipe out any thoughts of indoor cricket or training there was just time for some of our Junior Indoor sides to complete their indoor seasons with the U10s Dolphins and U11s Piranhas both winning their respective leagues with the U11s Dolphins, U12s, U14s and U12s Softball Girls all finishing as runners up, the u12s and 14s just missing out on winning the league in their final games.

As with almost all aspects of life we then had the first lockdown to contend with. During this time there were some great efforts from lots of our juniors to stay active and stay connected online. We had the 'Catch of the day' competitions on Facebook and various toilet roll challenge and video montages put together by parents, coaches and players. Special thanks should go to Katherine Sheldon and Jess Boyd for putting videos together and Craig Rochford and Caroline Boyd for keeping up with getting the daily content out there.

Eventually in April we could commence outdoor coaching, at first in a strictly 1:1 capacity with but in late May we could begin coaching in small groups. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to utilise our usual facilities at Poole Grammar School so instead moved our sessions to Poole Park and Whitecliff. This proved to be a blessing in disguise as due to the additional visibility the two venues afforded us, we picked up around 10-15 new players across the age groups including a number of girls picking up a bat for the first time.

The small group coaching had a positive effect on our players as the coaches were able to dedicate more time to individuals and work on specific skills and tactics which certainly benefited us later in the season. Thanks should go to the entire coaching team, Brad Currie, Lizzie Williams, Lauren Dollimore, Ben Pocknell, Dan Winward, Kirt Holland, Craig Roachford, Tim Wright and Nick Heckford for delivering some fantastic sessions in sometimes less than ideal conditions and at a time when many other clubs had very little activity taking place for juniors. From a lead coaches perspective, it has been great to see the development of the coaches last summer and fantastic that Brad and Dan have taken on roles within the DCB which will only aid their development as we look towards the future.

Once our travelling friends had departed the Park it was all go for a friendly mini season running from late July through to the middle of September. A real team effort from the team managers saw us manage to put on a staggering amount of Junior cricket with both the Park and Whitecliff playing host to some exiting games of both intra-club and friendlies against other clubs. One important point and a positive we can take away from this was the ability to set up friendlies particularly against clubs we would not usually play against, later in the summer when there wouldn't usually be a lot of cricket going on for juniors. At times we had simultaneous home games taking place at Whitecliff and Poole Park sometimes on multiple nights of the week and almost always on Saturday mornings. The club are indebted to several people for getting fixture lists together at the drop of a hat, Casa Reed, Jon Swan, Craig & Tim (again), Team Baker, Dave and Susannah Walsh, Gareth Williams-Gardner, Penny & Stu Dennis and Nick Williams all managed to find fixtures quickly and crucially, avoid clashes!!

Whilst there are far too many notable performances and games to mention I will throw in a few highlights. The u14s/15s played 6 or 7 games and had particularly enjoyable victories against Hamworthy and Christchurch. The u13s had 9 games arranged but unfortunately lost a couple to the

weather including the hotly anticipated Parents and Kids game at Whitecliff! They also managed victories against Christchurch and Hamworthy. Lara Sheldon was voted player of the year with Stephen Warren the most improved and a special mention for Sam Baker who had a good all-round summer. The u11 Dolphins played 5 games, the highlight undoubtedly beating Wimborne twice on the same night at Wimborne! The u11s Piranhas Won 4 out of 4 games with 1 abandoned away at Swanage. The U10s Dolphins played 7 and won 7 with highlights being big wins against Bournemouth, Bashley and Wimborne (twice). Lola Holland, Eli Parsons and Harry Swan all picked up maiden 5-fors for the u10s vs Verwood, Bashley and Wimborne respectively. The u10s Piranhas had 6 games planned but lost a couple to the weather, they also managed victories against Parley and Swanage. The u8s and 9s played several intra-club fixtures throughout the summer amongst 3 or 4 fixtures and it was very pleasing to see so many new faces in action at our 'introduction to hardball' game and the 6-a-side Hardball tournament in September.

The girls section continues to grow, I think it would be quite safe to say we are the club with the largest girl's section in the county. Across the various girls age groups there were 6 fixtures specifically for the girls with highlights being the 11-a-side game at Poole Park vs South Wilts and games vs Broadstone at the Delph. The girls continue to play major roles within the boy's teams, it is not uncommon to see teams with 2,3 and sometimes 4 girls playing in boy's sides for Poole.

At the time of writing, we have just had the list of boys who have been selected for County, County Development, County Shadow and District age group squads. We have 27 boys involved and we expect an equally impressive number of Girls to be included in the Dorset ladies' squad in due course.

It was also great to see so many junior cricketers and former juniors playing in adult sides again last year, we expect the trend to continue this season and are in the process of organising Sunday cricket for juniors and parents for next Summer as a steppingstone from junior to adult cricket. We also have plans in place to start the junior committee and restart the PTCC Academy in 2021. All Stars cricket will hopefully be making a return this summer for ages 5-8 years old with the scheduled launch in May and we also have plans for scoring workshops for parents for those wishing to help out on match days once we can recommence outdoor cricket.

As is often the case, volunteers are what make clubs tick and last year was no different. As we approach the 2021 season, we do have plenty of opportunities for club members and parents to get involved and help out within the junior section, from managing teams and coaching to scoring and running the bar we are always on the lookout for help so please get in touch should you wish to be involved. A last thank you must go to Nick Williams for his tireless work behind the scenes to ensure junior cricket at Poole Town is always high on the list of priorities. Without Nick's organisation there is no way we would have been able to have the summer that we ended up having last year and I think I speak for most when I say that junior cricket was a very welcome distraction for both parents and players alike during a very challenging time.

Report completed by Joey Wormington.